J. E. Odgers.

ADDRESS

AT THE

OPENING OF THE SESSION

OF

MANCHESTER NEW COLLEGE,

DELIVERED AT UNIVERSITY HALL, LONDON,

OCTOBER 14, 1861.

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Principal.

LONDON:

EDWARD T. WHITFIELD, 178, STRAND.

1861.

HACKNEY:
PRINTED BY CHARLES GREEN.

ADDRESS.

THERE are two tendencies powerfully at work in the present day, both referring to religion as their common subject, and each having a worth and significance of its own, which are nevertheless often considered antagonistic, and the results of which, it must be confessed, are not at first view always easy to reconcile. There are, first, the men of action and feeling, weary of controversial strife and longing for some positive, substantial faith, who want a religion that comes home direct to men's business and bosoms, and attests its origin by its effects; who care nothing for evidences and theological theories, and are willing for the sake of peace to acquiesce without question in the traditional formulas of their own church, if they can find in them any elements of practical truth and any power of efficient religious influence. All that such men ask about a religion is, whether it works well—whether it meets and satisfies a great social want. Besides these, there is a smaller but not uninfluential class, who cannot be content to leave the deepest interests of the human soul so entirely in the dark; who are driven by a sort of mental necessity to trace back effects into their causes; who demand a reason for their belief—such reason, at least, as the nature of the subject admits; and who do not stop in their search for it till they are cut short by the impenetrable mystery which envelops, and ever must envelop, the fundamental laws of being. With such men truth is everything. They regard it as treason to truth to think about consequences. When they have discovered as much truth as lies within their reach,

and thrown on their mortal pathway as much light as suffices for their own guidance and inward peace, they conclude that their task is done, and, without troubling themselves about the popular faiths, acquiesce in the result. The question at issue between these two parties, apparently so much at variance, is complicated by their usually acknowledging in common a historical religion like Christianity,—which possesses a vague though unquestioned authority for the one, and furnishes a point of departure for the researches of the other; but which, so far from exhibiting any one and explicit statement of divine truth upon which a man can at once put his finger and say, This is the gospel,—has its root, its manifestation and its development, in a multifarious literature of most diversified authorship and date, ranging over more than a thousand years, and conveyed in two languages, belonging to a different human family and of most opposite genius, a thorough mastery of which demands the unintermitted study of years. Out of this mass of writings, rich in the profoundest utterances of intuitive wisdom and prophetic insight, the popular instinct has drawn almost unconsciously, at the bidding of the voice within, the elements most needed for comfort and direction in life,—not, indeed, always independent of sanctions tinged by the superstition of the time, and sometimes attached to the gratuitous assumptions of a metaphysical theology, but still conveying, in spite of a large adhesion of dry husks, no small amount of spiritual nutriment to the soul. Unfortunately, though perhaps inevitably, the husk and the grain have been so constantly swallowed together, that the popular sense is unable to distinguish them, and thinks the one as wholesome as the other. And now comes the difficulty, when those who will think and must inquire, begin to perceive the vital distinction as yet unfelt by the vulgar,—the distinction between the living word of God, "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit," and the dim cloud of human speech through which it burns its way—the gem bright with "the sapphire blaze" of the living throne, and the framework of perishable clay in which it is set; see clearly enough, that the historical rind, which left to itself would natu-

rally burst and give way, instead of sheltering, by artificial compression stifles and dwarfs, the fruit within; and yet often find to their cost, that they cannot, even in the pursuit of the most obvious truths, effect the separation between them, needful as it is to mental growth and expansion, without wounding the religious sensibilities, and in some cases, where there has been any roughness or irreverence in the operation, without seriously damaging, at least for a season, the religious convictions of multitudes. "Why disturb foundations," says the practical philanthropist, "on which so much peace and hope, so much virtuous motive, depend?" "What is faith worth," replies the scholar, "where the foundation is unsound? Is it really instructing the people, to give them untruths or half-truths, instead of undoubted facts and absolute verities?"

To adjust the claims, apparently so incompatible, of these two parties,—to reconcile the demands of practical religion with the results of honest and fearless research,—to find out the point of their just equilibrium, where they will rightly balance each other and keep either extreme from undue exaltation,—is the great religious problem of the day, growing out of the crisis which the irresistible progress of human ideas has brought on, and which no momentary compromise with immediate difficulties, and no adroit evasion of the whole truth, can permanently arrest or set aside. In the momentous character of the consequences involved in its practical solution, this question transcends in importance and interest any of those which for three centuries past have engaged the common thought of the scholar and the philanthropist.

As a contribution towards arriving at some intelligible conclusion on the subject, and no unsuitable introduction to a new session of philosophical and theological study, I shall attempt in a few words, as best I may, to shew, that practical religion, the religion that lies closest to the immediate demands of the conscience and the life, can only be rescued from doubt and fear and placed on a solid basis, by pursuing the researches of the scholar with perfect honesty into all their consequences, even should some not inconsiderable errors be evolved in the interme-

diate process; and that, on the other hand, the facts of daily observation and experience, with the inner witness of all humble and pious souls, are not less wanted as a limit and direction to the thoughts of those who hunt for truth in old books and deep theories, or desire to look on her face in the pure and still air of abstract contemplation.

The theological scholar, then, who comprehends his vocation, must, I maintain, hold himself bound, not by intellectual pride, but by the truest piety, to be honest, courageous and outspoken; for he has taken on himself the service of the God of truth. Enough light has already spread through every region of society, in countries like our own, to make even the unlearned, if they reflect, fully aware, that statements are constantly put forth with a show of confidence by the professional expounders of religious truth, which rest on no satisfactory evidence and are beset with the gravest difficulties, and that these things are slurred over or kept in the background, because they cannot be defended and explained. A more unhappy relation between the teacher and the taught cannot well be imagined. All moral influence is lost from the moment it is suspected that the authority to which submission is demanded, stands on hollow ground, and that public instructors either do not know the whole truth, or if they know it, will not declare it. Doubt and difficulty are mischievously exaggerated in this state of suspense. What is unknown or dimly seen, is supposed to be greater than it really is. The same objection which, candidly stated and explained with simplicity as far as it admits of explanation, would fall harmless on the inquiring mind, and leave untouched the great fundamental truths to which it may outwardly be attached, will prove in the highest degree noxious and destructive when it breaks all at once on a state of opinion wholly unprepared for its reception, and carry with it for a time into common ruin the practical convictions with which it is intermixed. From this perilous contingency there is no escape but in the simple honesty of those whose high function it is to search for the truth and to deliver it. Often, indeed, they will have to confess their ignorance and their inability to answer the questions put to them. But acknow-

ledged participation in difficulty by those who are looked up to as wise and instructed, deprives that difficulty of half its force, and tempers the painful feeling of disparity between the learned and the unlearned, by a reconciling sense of our common human limitation. It is well that the unwise should learn from the wise, how little we know and ever can know on earth, of matters which transcend our sphere of present experience, and that it is not the least valuable part of knowledge to discern its impassable boundaries.* Pride of intellect, a charge often vaguely hurled about by those who are themselves the most obnoxious to it, is usually the vice, not of knowledge, but of ignorance; for it is by our knowledge that we measure our ignorance. We are enveloped in mystery; it is the superficial, not the profound, who think they can dissipate it. "I cannot resolve in my mind," said that great naturalist, the late Edward Forbes, "the many queries which the consideration of the most insignificant of organized creatures suggests, without feeling that the rejection of a mystery because it is a mystery, is the most besotted form of human pride." †

Over and above these general considerations, which go to shew that in religion, as in everything else, straightforward honesty is the wisest and safest policy, I have further to remark, that in the present rapidly advancing state of scientific inquiry, it is hardly left to our own choice to be outspoken or disingenuous, and that the resistless logic of facts will compel us to let out the truth, whether we like it or not. Christianity is not an insulated phenomenon in the history of our race. Its roots spread far and wide in the language and literature of many lands and remote times; so that whatever modifies our view of the past, must proportionally affect our conception of Christianity. Thoughtful study of it as a vital element in the development of humanity, runs out into many closely-connected branches of knowledge,

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* At sunt vestiganda quædam, sunt et decernenda quædam. Non abnuo. Sed e diverso permulta sunt quæ rectius sit omittere quam inquirere. Et scientiæ pars est quædam nescire, permulta de quibus salubrius est ambigere quam statuere. *Erasmus Dorpio.*

† Quoted in his Life by Wilson, p. 548.

which cannot be controlled by the fears or the prejudices of the theologian; and among these are some, which have sprung into existence, and others, the primary conditions of which have been almost revolutionized, since the days when the standard defences of the Protestant faith were put forth. And can the ideas which constitute Christianity, remain stiff and motionless, while the ideas which grow into them and out of them, are full of life and action? Is the one spot in the whole range of human thought to which our deepest interest and reverence attach, to be struck with barrenness, while all around it is blossoming and bearing fruit? If the theologian would fain keep it so, the secular intellect will wrest it from him, and assert a nobler divinity than his. Geology was unknown when Scaliger and Usher wrote, but it has for ever swept away the bases on which their elaborate systems are built. Humboldt's Kosmos cannot by any ingenuity be strained into accordance with that view of the physical universe on which the whole biblical representation rests; but it is founded on demonstration, and commands in its grand outlines the assent of the entire scientific world. These things are not theories, but facts —facts of which the popular intelligence is every day becoming more fully possessed. And if facts, it is impossible to evade them; they must be accepted and explained. Indeed, with regard to physical phenomena, we have already almost reached this conclusion. Even among conservative theologians it is not unusual now to make a distinction between moral and physical truth, and to admit, that while it is the object of the Bible to reveal the former, it does not profess to teach the latter. This is a part of the truth; but a thorough investigation and honest statement of all the facts of the case will carry us much further than this limited exposition of it. The physical sciences have, it is true, experienced an immense expansion within the last half century; but their fundamental data, as determinable mainly by the relations of quantity, have undergone, as they could undergo, no essential alteration; for wherever the mathematics have sway— and their despotic rule seems continually on the increase through the entire realm of matter—they fix beyond the reach of subsequent disturbance the groundwork of human knowledge. But

of the sciences which relate more immediately to human nature —language, mythology, ethnology, and the deeper criticism of history, literature and art—it is not too much to affirm, that the assumptions on which they were once undoubtingly rested, have broken down, in some cases have utterly perished, under the weight of a profounder and more searching investigation; and these are precisely the branches of knowledge which must of necessity exercise the directest influence on the interpretation of the Bible and our conception of the religion which issues from it. Men's ideas of Deity and their modes of worship have been shewn by a large induction of facts, ever to bear a certain relation to the capacity of the language they speak, to the idiosyncrasy of race, and to the modifications which result from the intercourse of different races with each other; and generally it is demonstrable in regard to all races, that their religious ideas pass through certain stages of progressive development, beginning with a sensuous fetischism, growing up into symbolism or a nobler anthropomorphism, and refining themselves gradually through metaphysical hypostases and apocalyptic imagery into spiritual convictions. History proves this to be so invariably the case, that we can hardly refuse to accept it as a law of human development; and not only have we no right to assume beforehand that the history of a particular people would be exempted from its operation, but the very records which that people have left of themselves, bear the distinctest traces of its working. Of the religious conceptions of a people in each of these stages of development, their rude monuments and oral traditions—what in time becomes their art and their literature—are the natural, and in one sense the unconscious manifestation.

I need not here assert, because by those who know my real sentiments I shall be understood to assume and acknowledge, the pre-eminent susceptibility of the Hebrew race, above all other peoples, to the higher inspirations of religion, and the function assigned them by Providence through the consummation of their spiritual economy in Christ, of revealing one living God of love and holiness to the world. It is more pertinent to my present object to observe, how our conception of this, the

greatest fact in the moral history of our planet, must be affected by the new light shed on all those sciences with which the right interpretation of the Bible is inextricably involved; and, while we handle that venerable book not with less, but only with a more intelligent reverence, how widely our conclusions respecting it must often deviate from those who assume it to be a work of one quality throughout,—who suppose its letter to contain strict historical fact and absolute spiritual truth from beginning to end, —who think it possible to prove, and even make its acceptance depend on the proof, that all the separate books of which it consists were written by the authors whose names they bear,—who repel with a kind of pious horror the intrusion of myth and erroneous speculation, of mistaken chronology and uncertain authorship within the limits of the sacred text,—who cannot, in fine, reconcile the ideas of progressive spiritual development and intellectual limitation with that of a divine revelation,—who insist on God pouring his whole truth into the mind all at once, instead of gently infusing it as he strengthens the spiritual organ to receive new light. These assumptions on which the popular theology rests, not only cannot be proved, but are capable of positive disproof; and they who cling to them in spite of evidence to the contrary, endanger the whole authority of scriptural religion by staking its credit on the maintenance of their groundless prejudices. I do not know that we can more adequately describe the Bible than as a national literature, collected, guarded, and in some portions revised, by the religious conscience of a peculiar people. And let not that word literature deceive us. The same words mean very different things at different times. Literature now is not the same thing that it was in its origin and rudiments. With us, literature in all its forms—the production of a book—is perhaps the most distinct and emphatic expression of self-consciousness that we can imagine—the deliberate surrender of a portion of our inmost soul to our fellow-beings—pre-eminently a moral act, fenced in by the innumerable obligations and liabilities which grow out of the refined and complicated relationships of our Christian civilization. But literature (if we may use the word of mental products before the general use of

writing) in its origin was less an act of determinate aim, than obedience to a simple instinct; and the deeper the feeling out of which it sprung, the more unconscious was its working. At first, scarce any intellectual element was involved in it. It was the omnipresent Spirit using the soul of man as its natural organ. The heart of primitive humanity burst into song as freely and as abundantly as the birds in spring. These utterances carried with them no feeling of personal distinction or personal responsibility. The rights and the duties of authorship were then alike unknown. Joy and sorrow had a natural language of their own, which belonged to the tribe and not to the individual, though one voice might be prized above the rest for its strength or its sweetness. The consequence was, that the simple poetry and rude chronicles of early times were regarded very much as a common property and a joint inheritance, over which the tribe or family had an absolute control, and which might be enlarged or abbreviated and continually re-cast, with the retention of the old name, without a thought of invading literary property or violating literary honesty. These ideas belong to a far later day. For ages a sort of literary communism prevailed. Bards were incorporated in guilds. There were schools of poets as well as schools of prophets. Even of the great Homeric poems all scholars know how difficult it is to prove the historical authorship; and in the form in which we now possess them, they have undoubtedly to some extent been modernized and interpolated. It is true, when books were multiplied, and learning became a pursuit, and literature a profession, the old ideas underwent a change; and in the Alexandrine period particularly, when libraries were first collected, intentional fraud was often practised, and books were fabricated under false titles to procure a sale or to recommend particular opinions. Such practices, however, were exceptional, and condemned even then. Still among writers of the highest class the old feeling so far subsisted, that the literary inheritance of the past was regarded in some sense as a common property, which might be freely used for any purpose that seemed conducive to the instruction of the present. History, for instance, was written less perhaps to describe events as they actually occurred, than for the

sake of the moral lessons which it was fitted to yield. Plutarch's Lives—one of the noblest products of the religious wisdom of heathenism—strongly betray this didactic tendency; and the speeches put by the greatest ancient historians into the mouths of statesmen and generals, probably originated in a similar desire. Keep this distinction between the literary feeling of ancient and of modern times clearly in view, and you will see how unreasonable it is to apply our modern standard of judgment to works produced under such different circumstances, and from a moral point of view so opposite to that which is recognized by us. You will perceive that the credit of the Bible, and the authority of the religion which it reveals, are not upset by the discovery that the authorship of particular books is uncertain or wrongly assigned, that the form in which we now possess them is probably not that in which they were originally put forth, or that all the words and events recorded in them are not strictly accordant with historical fact. Criticism has gained an insight into the laws which governed the genesis of the most ancient literature, and we are not justified in demanding that one book should be an exception to all the rest. What we want is evidence of simple, ingenuous utterance, of faithful record of the actual belief and conviction of the time, of unconscious witness to the working of God's Spirit in the hearts and lives of men. The individual authorship of books is, in this view, of less importance than their issuing out of the bosom of a particular society and expressing with unconscious truthfulness its indwelling spirit. The depth and richness of a divine revelation are manifested in its influence on many minds of various temper and capacity,—in its imbuing them with a common feeling, and giving them a common aim and impulse,—not in its authoritative utterance by one, where it must be limited by the intellectual peculiarities of the individual. Hence the advantage of a religious literature over a single religious book. Hence the transcendant superiority of the Bible to the Koran. We have the literature of the prophetic age in the Old Testament, and that of the apostolic age in the New; and we find in their respective literatures the clearest internal evidence how deeply the Spirit of God was working in both. We

know now, from principles not gratuitously assumed, but deduced from undoubted fact, under what conditions all religious history is developed, and what phenomena we may expect to meet in it. That these phenomena occur in our Bible is no argument against its religious worth in the view of any right-judging man, but rather a proof that it can be no subsequent fabrication. We are not at liberty to accept the doctrines of Niebuhr and his school in relation to all other history, and deny their application to that of the Jews. Nor is it any refutation of the principle involved in them, to be able to shew that various theories framed in accordance with it are wrong in detail. The grand problem remains unaltered in all its essential conditions, whatever may become of any attempted solution of it. That the date and authorship and original form of many of our sacred books are very uncertain, that they exhibit on some points conflicting and irreconcilable views, that there is in all of them a mixture of the divine and human, and that the outline of actual history is here and there dimmed or hidden by a veil of mythic conception,—these are facts which no one of competent knowledge will venture in the present day to deny, however De Wette or Vatke or Strauss or Baur may be shewn to have failed in explaining them; and they are the facts on which a criticism at once reverent and free must continue to employ itself, if we are to have a clear faith and an intelligible Bible. Fear nothing, then, from thoroughly honest discussion. Two facts stand out, like granite peaks, in the dim ocean of the past, against which the tornados of scepticism and the surges of criticism beat in vain—that wonderful religious teaching by Hebrew prophets, to which heathenism furnishes not even an approximate parallel, and the mysterious spiritual phenomena which break in on the world's history at the commencement of our era, and which are wholly inexplicable except on the supposition of a Christ, such as the Gospels disclose to us, as their centre and source.

Of the criticism which we are compelled by scientific honesty to adopt, there is yet another view to be taken, which will place its results in a different light and recommend them to the practical religionist. At first sight its processes appear simply

destructive. But of what are they destructive? Not one of the grand spiritual truths of which the Bible is the vehicle and by which the souls of men are truly nourished, is touched by them. On the contrary, they are conservative of what is religious as distinct from what is merely historical. By shewing how the two elements are related to each other, how the one is subject to the unvarying laws of human development and could not be exempted from them without losing all evidence of past reality, and how the other comes direct from the Source of spiritual light, yet can only flow into our world through a human channel,—it enables us to cast aside with indifference, or to regard simply with an antiquarian and scientific interest, the old husk which once protected the fruit, and still serves to shew where and when it grew, and to enucleate for our use in a purer state the precious contents which it has brought us. And is not the recognition of this distinction, which a conscientious criticism actually forces on us, a positive relief to many a pious Christian—who has been constantly distracted by the most conflicting emotions in the indiscriminate use of his Bible, as much repelled by some passages as attracted and awed by others, and who has often been afraid to put the whole Scripture into the hands of his children, lest they should light on texts which might disturb the peace or stain the purity of their minds? Let us accept, then, with gratitude this inevitable result of true learning, that the religion of the Bible is as distinct from its history, as matter conveyed is from its vehicle,—and the obvious inference from it, that in our public teaching they should be kept apart. We shall enter with a fuller and more unhesitating joy into the Psalmist's rich gush of devotional fervour, when we can see in the darker hues of vengeance and hate with which it is so constantly dashed, only the faithful reflection of peculiarities which grew unavoidably out of his stage of social advancement and the temperament of his race. We shall contemplate with purer delight the healing beneficence of Christ, when we are no longer perplexed by his doctrine of demoniacal possession. The great idea of a kingdom of God will not be the less but the more full of spiritual meaning and encouragement drawn from the deepest springs of

eternal truth, when we perceive that it has gone through all the phases of national development, that it has been realized to each successive generation through the beliefs that were familiar to them, and that to the last it was mixed up with mistaken expectations, and calculations of time that have proved erroneous. Our souls are nourished by the truth that is universal and everlasting, not by ideas that are local, transitory, perishable. These criticism bids us drop, as of the past; while it preserves to us the former in undiminished, nay, in augmented strength. It takes away from our religion what only deadens and encumbers it; and by the same process, which is at once destructive and conservative, it deepens and intensifies and brings out more clear and bright and strong, that inner faith of the soul by which alone we truly live.

I have attempted to shew, that a freer criticism of our sacred writings, like that which is now applied by scholars to all other ancient books, is not only a necessity forced on us by the present condition of all the related branches of knowledge, but a process yielding results which are really conducive to the interests of pure and spiritual religion; and that consequently the practical and religious reformer, instead of gratuitously raising a fruitless antagonism against the critic, should rather endeavour to find out what is his true relation towards him,—should accept with a generous trust in truth what he has proved can be no longer denied, and work amicably with him in adjusting the moral perceptions of the Christian world to the new points of view under which science has irreversibly placed some of the old objects of Christian faith. On the other hand, the practical Christian will not be the receiver only in this intercourse. He will give back to the theological scholar quite as much as he receives,—results of observation and experience amidst the every-day realities of life, without a constant reference to which the mere student of books will be sure to go astray in his speculations, and often abuse a sound criticism to an absurd conclusion. To find out the whole truth, the men of theory and the men of practice must help each other. The physical sciences have for many years acknowledged this; and the reports of the British Association

shew what splendid fruit has sprung from the connection. Why should religious inquiries be any exception to the general rule? From their nature they ought to benefit by its application above every other subject of human thought; for they deal not with questions to which only a superior intellect is equal, but embrace those grave inward realities which affect our nature through all its grades of development, and to which the universal experience of mankind bears witness. The free, unprejudiced scholar who would reduce the biblical statements to their true significance, and sees in them only an intenser manifestation of spiritual laws which are everywhere and always in operation,—he is not the obstacle to a full recognition of the value of this alliance between theory and practice, but the orthodox theologian who, by making God's dealings with men in Scripture something wholly exceptional, shuts them out from the witness of subsequent experience, and deprives the Bible of the strongest proof of its conveying a message from God. How grand and consolatory, rather, is the reflection, that the same God who spake to prophets and apostles in ancient times, still has access by his Spirit to our hearts, and breathes into our deepest consciousness the same convictions and trusts of which their recorded words are a solemn utterance! We know that they speak the truth—we recognize in their words the Word of the Living God,—from our own feebler experience of kindred visitations, and our instinctive reference of them to a Divine Source. We, like the men of old, are burdened with the sense of infirmity and sin; we, like them, long for spiritual redemption, and sigh after that eternal life which is only to be found in peaceful communion with God. The same words which comforted and strengthened them, comfort and strengthen us, and by working in us a godly sorrow, put our souls, like theirs, into right relationship towards God. We are raised into a new life by those who are spiritually stronger than ourselves. It is the law of our human development. But to apprehend what they bring to us, we must possess the same spiritual organs and have intuitions of primal truth fundamentally the same with theirs. The truths of which they are the vehicles, will then only the more strongly impress us—from the very distance at which

they are delivered to us—from the venerable histories in which they are wrapped up—from the examples of heroic or saintly excellence in which they are expressed.

Now to feel all this, and to find it in the Bible, we must bring to it some spiritual experience; we must not come to its pages with an empty heart and a torpid conscience, but already know something of religion as a reality within ourselves. Not without reason did the old divines insist on prayer and faith and a holy life, as the conditions of theological insight. You cannot attain theological truth in its widest and noblest sense by the intellect alone. To the young men who this day resume their course of philosophical and theological study within these walls, or engage anew in the introductory discipline which is to prepare them for it,—I would say, if you wish to know the whole truth of God, seek not to be scholars only, but religious scholars. Cultivate the religious life. Do not be ignorant from personal experience of the greatest realities of your being. Have an eye ever open to the deepest wants of humanity, and ask yourselves constantly how they are to be met. Study, as you have opportunity, records of the experience and labours of holy, devoted and self-denying men, who have lived in close communion with God and dived deep into religious experience, and been successful in reviving the languid piety and building up anew the decayed religious life of their time. This is profitable reading for the future teacher of religion; for it supplies the facts which must be made the postulates of every living theology, and may help to counteract the somewhat arid and consuming effect on the mind of continual engagement with historical criticism and abstract speculation. Shall I be thought to wander from my proper subject, if I add finally, cultivate an acquaintance with the great poets of all ages and imbibe their living thought? Next to the Bible, great poets are the best interpreters of the spiritual mystery of human life. They lay open the recesses of the soul, and betray its deepest needs and utter its sublimest aspirations, and in their highest strains are not distinguishable from prophets. Enriched with spiritual knowledge from all these sources, your mind will be prepared for the successful study of theology, and

you will have firm hold of the primary assumptions on which, if it is to have any solid basis, theology must rest. The spiritual sense thus formed within, will furnish an unerring test for the discrimination of the human and the divine in the words of Scripture: at its touch the former will precipitate itself as a mere historical sediment, while the latter will be at once disengaged from it as a pure and vital element. In this way the claims of a scientific theology and practical religion will be best reconciled.

To blend in candidates for the Christian ministry a free spirit of theological inquiry and the solid learning which is its indispensable instrument, with religious earnestness and the power of effectually communicating religious truths and impressing religious convictions, is the main design of this Institution,—a design in closest connection with the great demand of our time, but the complete fulfilment of which in all who aim at it is not so easily attained. The conditions which must combine to the formation of an accomplished religious teacher, have relation to different mental aptitudes, and have too often been developed apart. We have had learned theologians who were no preachers, and eloquent preachers who were no theologians. Without attempting to efface the original differences of individual character, which would in itself be an evil, is it not possible to unite the two characters to such an extent as to meet more adequately than we have hitherto done, the growing want of society,—the want at once of intellectual light and spiritual fervour? All science is beginning to expound itself to the popular ear—to gather round it a group of eager listeners, as well as to lay profound treatises on the solitary student's desk. Theology, which is the science of religious truth, if it would keep its hold on the general mind, must follow the same course. We are but reverting to the practice of antiquity, the final object of whose scholastic discipline was to make men speakers. I would say to the young men who now hear me, As you would fulfil the special mission of your age, and not study in vain, cultivate the gifts of utterance,—learn how to clothe your thoughts in clear, manly, persuasive and energetic speech. Remember that truth loses half its value when disjoined from the power to impart it. I know

how little mere rules and discipline can effect for this purpose; and were they ever so effective, of themselves they could only produce a cold, artificial result. True eloquence must come from the soul within, and every one who is thoroughly in earnest, has his measure of it. Think, then, of the work to which Providence has summoned you. Think of its nobleness. Think of the great and good men who through all time have been associated with you in it,—striving to build up God's kingdom on earth. Reflect that for this end your knowledge of languages and your acquaintance with science and philosophy have been acquired, and consecrate them to its attainment. Think of the purposes of good that may be excited—of the dark prejudices that may be dispelled—of the hindrances to mental and moral advancement that may be removed—of the deliverance from doubt and fear and misery that may be effected for thousands—by your religious use of the intellectual powers which you are here cultivating, and of the literary treasures which you are here heaping up,—think of this, keep this end of your work ever in view,—and it will give you a heart to feel and a tongue to speak, and your heart speaking through your tongue will not speak in vain.

Perhaps there never was a time when there was a stronger call for a ministry at once enlightened and devout, at once instructed and earnest, and when before such a ministry there lay a clearer prospect of doing good. I have pointed out some of the qualifications for such a ministry, and urged our young friends to cultivate them. Shall I be considered as stepping beyond my sphere, if I venture to say a word to congregations, and to tell them, that they too have their duties as well as those who minister to them, and that they must lend their aid in calling forth such a ministry as the present state of the world requires? How are we to draw the best and noblest minds into it? What is the chief function of a minister of religion? Till that is distinctly apprehended, duties on both sides will be misunderstood, and there will be mutual dissatisfaction. That function, if I rightly apprehend it, is to nourish the religious life of the world by the earnest enforcement, under all their aspects and in all their applications, of the great truths which express the eternal relations

of the human soul with God—truths on which the soul's spiritual growth essentially depends, but which the pursuits of the world continually hide from its view. He must of course take part with those around him in the practical work of a Christian church; but his proper business is to study for others' benefit truths of the highest order and shew their endless applications to life. He must undertake no work that would oblige him to neglect this. He cannot else be an effectual preacher of Christianity. If, then, you appreciate his peculiar work, if you feel its importance, and desire it should be done well, three things you must keep in mind in respect to your minister, especially when he is young. First, you must not overtask his powers. If his mind is not to be prematurely exhausted, you must leave him leisure for study, for collected thought, for mental refreshment. Spiritual fruit, worth the raising, cannot be exacted in ever-recurring measures from the mind, like mechanical labour from the hands. A practice more destructive of all vigour and freshness of thought could not well be devised than that of demanding from a young man two written compositions every Sunday, with perhaps occasional services during the week. It is surprising that so much sound intellect as still exists in the pulpit, should have survived such a process. When complaints are made of the dulness and monotony of sermons, the question may well be asked, how much of this may not be due to the unreasonable demands of the congregation? One discourse well thought out and carefully put together is as much as even a strong mind can furnish week after week, and not even that without occasional intermission. The whole of Sunday need not be devoted to the formality of preaching. There is room and demand for a familiar teaching of first principles to the young and uninstructed, conveyed in plain and extemporaneous language, which would often beneficially replace the languid performance which is called a second service, and in preparing for which by close and consecutive study the minister will enrich instead of exhausting his mind. I believe this over-demand of original composition to be a great evil in the present constitution of our churches, which if not remedied will have the effect of

deterring the best minds from their service. Secondly, sympathize with your minister in all his earnest aspirations after higher truth. Do not watch every fervent utterance of his soul with sectarian suspicion to find in it some lurking taint of heresy. Let enthusiasm for whatever is right and noble, and Christian indignation against all falsehood and wrong, have their free course. Do not tie him down to your own intellectual standard. Demand only evidence of seriousness and devotion and the fervour of a pure mind. A wider manifestation of this trustful, catholic spirit in our churches would do far more than subtle disputes about doctrines and evidences, to draw the best minds into their service, and to strengthen our spiritual bonds with the many searchers outside who are looking for freedom and know not where to find it. Thirdly, do not be regardless of your minister's temporal comfort. If he loves his vocation, he will not need to be attracted towards it by the prospect of wealth and worldly distinction. He will find it to a large extent its own reward. But if you really value his work, it is only reasonable that you should secure, as far you can, the conditions of its efficient performance. You must know, that mental efforts worthy of the cause of Christ cannot be produced under care and despondency, in the absence of the comforts and decencies of life, and amidst the anxieties which wait on an insufficient or precarious income. If the Christian ministry be really a noble and dignified vocation, and should be supported accordingly, there is something in the present state of our social relations which needs rectification in this respect. In many wealthy families a cook or a butler who ministers to our lowest animal wants, is more liberally remunerated than those whose professed office it is to satisfy the hunger and thirst of immortal souls.

I say these things in no captious or querulous spirit, but simply to mark emphatically the character of our time. The question was, how we can call forth such a ministry as the age requires; and in attempting an answer, it was necessary to state without reserve the conditions essential to its production. I am far from being unhopeful about the future. On the contrary, I do not know that I ever commenced a session in better hope. We have

this year a larger number of students than I can remember since my connection with the College. We do not admit indiscriminately all applicants; and those who have entered this session, give promise of ability and a successful career.

Of our undergraduates—students in the classes of University College—I am happy in being able to give the following favourable report. At the announcement of prizes and certificates in June last, their names stood thus.—*Mathematics, Higher Junior:* first prize, Mr. Jos. Estlin Carpenter, with a special commendation from the Professor at the time of its delivery; second prize, Mr. Richard Pilcher; fifth certificate, Mr. John Ainsworth; sixth certificate, equal with three others, Mr. David Ainsworth; seventh certificate, equal with one other, Mr. R. A. Armstrong. *Mathematics, Lower Junior:* first prize, Mr. Arthur Payne, equal with one other (the son of Rev. R. B. Aspland). *Latin Senior:* second prize, Mr. J. E. Odgers; seventh certificate, equal with another, Mr. R. Pilcher. *Latin Junior:* first prize, Mr. J. E. Carpenter; third certificate, Mr. David and Mr. John Ainsworth, equal; fourth certificate, Mr. Ambrose N. Blatchford. *Greek Senior:* sixth certificate, Mr. J. E. Odgers. *Greek Junior:* prize, Mr. J. E. Carpenter; second certificate, Mr. R. A. Armstrong, Mr. J. S. Ainsworth and Mr. A. Payne, equal; fifth certificate, Mr. A. N. Blatchford; sixth certificate, Mr. D. Ainsworth, equal with another. At the first B.A. examination for honours, Mr. J. E. Odgers was bracketed in the first place with two others.

And now, to conclude this long address, let me say in two words, that looking out on the world around us, and considering the painful position in which many enlightened and truth-seeking men are now placed by their implied ecclesiastical obligations, I think we have reason to be satisfied with the free, unfettered Nonconformity which we inherit from our noble-minded forefathers. Only let us regard that freedom not as any merit of ours, but as a privilege and a trust which carries with it a corresponding obligation, and will disgrace rather than honour us if we do not honestly and courageously use it. Let all of us whose studies are carried on in this place, whether laymen or divines, understand the full value of that great principle by which, amidst

our diversities of pursuit and destination, we are all here bound together in one generous communion of free thought and free speech; and by consistently acting out that principle in our conduct through life, let us prove to a distrustful world, how possible it is to reconcile a wise conservatism with healthy progress, and to combine the freest search after truth with the reverent humility of a pious heart.

C. Green, Printer, Hackney.